



REPORT TO COUNCIL City of Sacramento

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Information
March 24, 2009

Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council

Title: Vehicular Traffic on K Street

Location/Council District: K Street, 8th to 12th streets, Council District 1

Recommendation: Receive and file. Staff will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a study to examine options for mixed-flow traffic and transit operations on the K Street Mall.

Contact: Melissa Anguiano, Economic Development Project Manager, 808-5864; Leslie Fritzsche, Downtown Development Manager, 808-5450; Hector Barron, Traffic Engineering Manager, 808-2669; Jerry Way, Director of Transportation, 808-6381

Presenters: n/a

Department: Economic Development Department and Department of Transportation

Division: Downtown and Traffic Engineering Divisions

Organization No: 18001021 and 15001141

Description/Analysis

Issue: During the October 14, 2008 City Council meeting, Council requested a report back on reintroducing vehicular traffic on K Street Mall (the Mall). Following this request staff from both Economic Development and Transportation met to discuss the subject matter and determined that a potential pilot program to reintroduce vehicular traffic back onto the Mall could be feasible.

The current layout of K Street includes light-rail track alignments, station platforms, trees and street furniture. This leaves limited room to have vehicular traffic in its own dedicated lane, exclusive from light rail operations. One particular issue is the creation of grade separations between pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Rebuilding curbs on K Street was looked at as part of the K Street Streetscape Master Plan in an attempt to work towards a future of vehicular traffic on the Mall and as a means to separate street from sidewalk traffic. However, sidewalk slopes at many areas along the Mall are at minimum grade levels and building a curb would require significant reconfiguration of building entrances.

Taking these challenges into consideration, one potential opportunity for reintroducing vehicular traffic is to explore options for limited mixed-flow traffic and transit operations between 8th and 12th streets on K. Given the single light-rail track alignment between 7th and 8th streets, the 700 Block of K Street may not be a possible option to include in this plan. Limited mixed-flow traffic and transit operations on the Mall would require vehicles to operate over the light rail tracks. This type of operation would work most effectively outside of Sacramento Regional Transit's (RT) a.m. and p.m. peak commute periods.

In order to move forward with a more thorough evaluation, staff will issue a solicitation to commission a study that would look at options for mixed-flow traffic and transit operations on the Mall. This study would look at different options closely in two areas, including economic development and circulation/mobility. From an economic development standpoint, reintroducing vehicles to K Street would facilitate access to and increase visibility of businesses located along the Mall. Examination of existing circulation/mobility will also be critical to manage potential impacts to existing traffic circulation in the area, light rail operations and potentially bicycle traffic and streetcars. The study would also consider short and long-term alternatives for implementation.

In addition to design and operational considerations, the City will need to involve stakeholders as we move forward – including RT, the Downtown Sacramento Partnership (DSP), the Police Department, property owners and merchants. Initial discussions and outreach with RT and the DSP have been supportive and both groups are receptive to the concept.

Policy Considerations: Improvements to and the economic vitality of K Street are consistent with the Amended Merged Downtown Redevelopment Plan, the 2005-2009 Merged Downtown Redevelopment Implementation Plan, and the J-K-L Corridor Charette. Vehicular traffic on the Mall is also recommended in the Draft Sacramento Central City Urban Design Guidelines and Plan. Completion of this project could potentially bring significant enhancements to the area, improve circulation and access, and stimulate additional private investment.

Environmental Considerations:

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): The action to conduct a study is exempt from environmental review under the CEQA Guidelines. Prior to any changes that would involve allowing vehicular traffic along the K Street Mall, environmental review would be conducted as necessary to comply with CEQA.

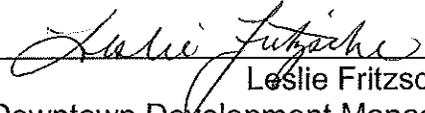
Sustainability Considerations: The commission of a mixed-flow traffic and transit operations study does not have sustainability considerations. Subject to the implementation of reintroducing vehicular traffic to the Mall, the project will make all considerations to meet requirements of the City's Sustainability Master Plan.

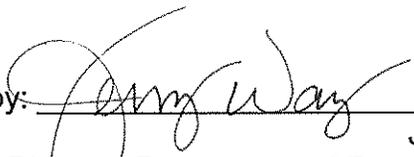
Rationale for Recommendation: It is in the best interest of the City, and those stakeholders involved, to study different mixed-flow traffic and transit operation options before implementing any type of program that reintroduces vehicular traffic on the Mall.

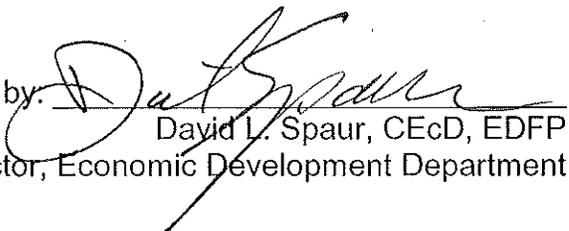
Elements such as street surface conditions, traffic signal operations, light-rail schedules and traffic flow and control are just a few items that will need to be considered and studied. This study is also important to identify and determine the cost to implement the project and any barriers the project may incur, such as loading and unloading zones, and parking options.

Financial Considerations: The study would likely be funded by a combination of Downtown Tax Increment and Economic Development monies, which could include streetscape resources set-aside from Major Street Construction Tax funds and/or other existing Capitol Improvement Projects (CIPs).

Emerging Small Business Development (ESBD): None

Respectfully Submitted by: 
Leslie Fritzsche
Downtown Development Manager

Approved by: 
Jerry Way
Director, Department of Transportation

Approved by: 
David L. Spaur, CEcD, EDFP
Director, Economic Development Department

Recommendation Approved:


Ray Kerridge
City Manager